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Who Will Replace Africa's First Female President? And Four Other African Elections To Watch Out For In 2017

Post by  Obianuju Okafor January 3, 2017

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a bad way;
there is the
President
looking to
extend his
tenure past constitutional term limits, an
opposition or several opposition parties
challenging him and a final devolution to violence
when the elections are over.

A couple of African elections in 2016 followed this
formula but some others like Ghana's elections
which saw Nana Akufo-Addo emerge as the winner
were a comforting break from the messy norm.

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Still, elections are a big deal around the world and
in Africa, they especially serve as a measurement of
democratic progress. The Gambia, for instance,
received numerous congratulations when
President Yahya Jammeh conceded defeat in the
December elections that saw Adama Barrow
emerging as the winner.

Unfortunately, President Yahya Jammeh later
changed his mind about conceding and began
agitating for fresh polls a few days after, once more
calling to mind the end result of most African
elections; a violent transition.



Below we list five African elections to watch out for in 2017;

The Democratic Republic of Congo

President Joseph Kabila's tenure as President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) actually came to an end on December 19, 2016 and deadly protests, arrests and an internet shutdown followed as the opposition insisted that the President was attempting to hold on to power by not fixing a date for elections.

After a bloody Christmas, the government and opposition members in the DR Congo appeared to have signed a deal on New Year's eve that could see president Joseph Kabila step down after the next election. The deal also suggests the appointment of a transitional government in March ahead of the elections which must take place before the end of the year.

If the agreement holds, it will be the first peaceful transfer of power since independence in 1960. There are, however, numerous doubts about the country holding the vote in 2017 given that the electoral commission once said that it would need

at least 17 months to complete registration processes and hold elections.

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Rwanda

On August 4, 2017, Rwandans should be hitting the polls to either elect President Paul Kagame for a third, seven-year term or casting their lot with a new candidate. President Kagame is actually credited with a lot of good policies and moves in the course of his Presidency. He had led the country to a referendum in 2015 which saw them vote for a constitutional amendment allowing Kagame to run for this new term and two more five-year terms after that.

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The elections in August will show just how popular the man who has been dubbed the “darling tyrant,” really is with the people that matter; Rwandan citizens.



Kenya

Kenya will also be going to the polls in August to elect almost 1900 public officials including the president, senators, county governors, members of the national and county assemblies, and women county representatives.

On August 8, 2017, Kenya's elections will pit incumbent president Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto against an opposition that has built a campaign around their failings in office.

The opposition is likely to pick as their candidate Raila Odinga who has been throwing his hat into the ring for the Presidency for almost 20 years. Whether Kenya's elections will join the sorry tales of other African elections is really up to the way or manner in which the country's embattled Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission conducts the election.



Angola

Another August election is that of Angola which will be the fourth elections in the country since it gained independence from Portugal in 1975. Angola's strongman President Jose Eduardo dos Santos, announced in December 2016 that he will step down as president before the 2017 elections.

Following his announcement, the ruling People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola party elected João Lourenco, a former defense minister, as vice president ahead of the elections. In Angola, the leader of the winning party automatically becomes the president.

Angola which is still dominantly a one-party state and has been ruled by dos Santos and his family over the last four decades will have a lot to prove about its democracy in 2017.



Liberia

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Liberia and Africa's first female president, will be leaving office in 2017 after 10 years in office. She most certainly did not have an easy run; rebuilding a country ravaged by war and dealing with the Ebola crisis, and come October 25, 2017, a new President-elect will have to take her place to continue rebuilding Liberia.

One key contender in the elections is George Weah, an ex-footballer who lost his first presidential bid to Sirleaf. Others are Jewel Howard-Taylor, the ex-wife of former Liberian president and warlord Charles Taylor and Vice president Joseph Boakai who will run for president on the government's record.

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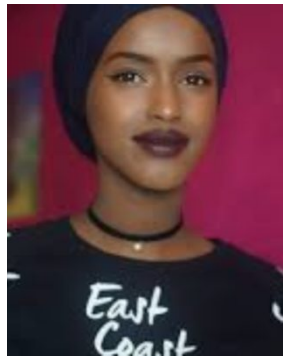
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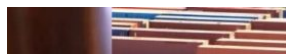
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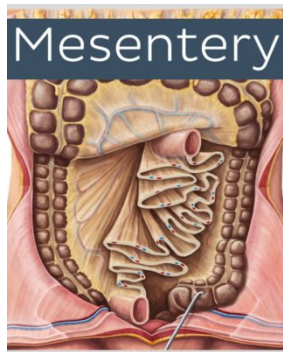
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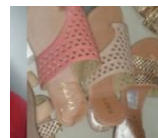
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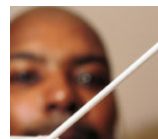
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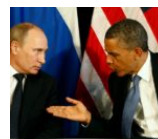
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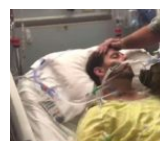
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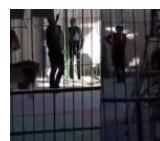
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